

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A universal lottery ticket, which can be used to participate in any one of a plurality of lottery-type drawing events, the ticket comprising:

a substrate, having an obverse and a reverse side;

a plurality of playing game pieces, which are disposed on the obverse side of the universal lottery ticket in at least one array, the at least one array comprising a plurality of panels, each of the plurality of panels comprising a number of playing game pieces; and

a removable material, having a surface, that is disposed over-- so as to conceal -- the plurality of playing game pieces, wherein a plurality of unique indicia is disposed on the surface of the removable material so that each of the plurality of unique indicia corresponds to only one of the plurality of panels.

2. The universal lottery ticket as recited in claim 1, wherein the plurality of playing game pieces comprises a series of integers.

3. The universal lottery ticket as recited in claim 1, wherein the number of playing game pieces in each of the plurality of panels is at least three.

4. The universal lottery ticket as recited in claim 3, wherein the number of playing game pieces in each of the plurality of panels is three.

5. The universal lottery ticket as recited in claim 3, wherein the number of playing game pieces in each of the plurality of panels is four.

6. The universal lottery ticket as recited in claim 1, wherein the universal lottery ticket is played by revealing all of the plurality of playing game pieces disposed under a combination of playing panels, said combination of playing panels comprises some but not all of the plurality of panels, wherein said combination of playing panels is unique to each drawing event of the plurality of lottery-type drawing events.

7. The universal lottery ticket as recited in claim 6, wherein all of the plurality of playing game pieces disposed in at least three of the plurality of panels are revealed.

8. The universal lottery ticket as recited in claim 7, wherein the at least three of the plurality of panels are consecutive.

9. The universal lottery ticket as recited in claim 7, wherein all of the plurality of playing game pieces disposed in three of the plurality of panels are revealed.

10. The universal lottery ticket as recited in claim 7, wherein all of the plurality of playing game pieces disposed in four of the plurality of panels are revealed.

11. The universal lottery ticket as recited in claim 1, wherein one or more of the plurality of game pieces comprises a free space.

12. The universal lottery ticket as recited in claim 1, the lottery further comprising one or more of the following:

instructions for using the lottery ticket in conjunction with any one of a plurality of lottery-type drawing events, which instructions are disposed on the reverse side of the ticket;

a name of the lottery-type event;

a day of the week and time during which the lottery-type drawing event takes places;

indicia of ownership and intellectual property rights of the owner or sponsor of the game;

a playing life of the lottery ticket; and

a means for authenticating the lottery ticket.

13. The universal lottery ticket as recited in claim 12, wherein the means for authenticating the lottery ticket is selected from a group consisting of:

a concealed validation symbol that is disposed on the lottery-ticket, wherein each of the plurality of panels is associated with a unique verification symbol that is revealed along with the playing game pieces;

a coded validation symbol comprising a plurality of lines of varying thickness that can be read by a reader; wherein said coded validation symbol is unique to each lottery ticket; and

a batch control number.

14. A method of playing a lottery game, the game being played by a plurality of participants, each participant having at least one lottery ticket, said at least one lottery ticket comprising a plurality of concealed playing game pieces disposed in at least one array comprising a plurality of panels, the method comprising the steps of:

selecting some but not all of the plurality of panels as a playing panel for each game;

revealing a plurality of playing game pieces disposed on the at least one lottery ticket, wherein said plurality of playing game pieces revealed includes only those concealed playing game pieces that are disposed beneath the selected plurality of panels;

randomly selecting a plurality of winning game pieces; and

determining whether any of the at least one lottery tickets is a winning lottery ticket.

15. The method as recited in claim 14, wherein at least three of the plurality of panels is selected as the playing panel for each game.

16. The method as recited in claim 15, wherein three panels are selected as the playing panel for each game.

17. The method as recited in claim 12, wherein four panels are selected as the playing panel for each game.

18. The method as recited in claim 15, wherein said at least three panels selected as the playing panel for each game comprises consecutive panels.

19. The method as recited in claim 11, wherein the plurality of playing game pieces are revealed by removing a removable material that is disposed over --so as to conceal -- said plurality of playing game pieces.

20. The method as recited in claim 14, wherein the method comprises the further steps of:

designating a unique sub-population of playing game pieces selected from a total population of playing game pieces so that each unique sub-population of playing game pieces is disposed as the playing game pieces in only one of the plurality of panels;

authenticating the validity of the lottery ticket; and

awarding a prize for each winning game ticket.

21. The method as recited in claim 14, wherein the number of winning game pieces selected is equal to the number of playing game pieces revealed.

22. The method as recited in claim 20, wherein some but not all of the plurality of winning game pieces are selected from each of the unique sub-populations of playing game pieces designated for each of the plurality of panels selected.

23. The method as recited in claim 22, wherein the number of winning game pieces selected from each of the unique sub-populations of playing game pieces is equal to the number of playing game pieces revealed in each of the corresponding panels.

24. The method as recited in claim 14, wherein a lottery ticket is a winning lottery ticket if a combination of winning game pieces matches a combination of revealed playing game pieces in the playing panel so that at

least three of the revealed playing game pieces adjoin horizontally, vertically or diagonally to form at least one line.

25. The method as recited in claim 14, wherein more than one discrete plurality of panels is selected and more than one plurality of playing game pieces are revealed so that the lottery ticket can be used for more than one drawing event, which drawing events involve separate selection of winning game pieces and separate determination of whether the at least one lottery ticket is a winning lottery ticket.

26. A lottery game, the game being played by a plurality of participants, the game comprising:

a plurality of lottery tickets, wherein each of said plurality of lottery tickets comprises:

a substrate, having an obverse and a reverse side;

a plurality of playing game pieces, which are disposed on the obverse side of the universal lottery ticket in at least one array, the at least one array comprising a plurality of panels, each of the plurality of panels comprising a number of playing game pieces; and

a removable material, having a surface, that is disposed over-- so as to conceal -- the plurality of playing game pieces, wherein a plurality of unique indicia is disposed on the surface of the removable material so that each of the plurality of unique indicia corresponds to only one of the plurality of panels;

a drawing event designation; and

a random selection device, wherein said random selection device selects a plurality of winning game pieces.

27. The lottery game as recited in claim 26, wherein the drawing event designation comprises a unique combination of playing panels that comprise at least three of the plurality of panels, the playing game pieces of which are revealed by removing the removable material.

28. The lottery game as recited in claim 27, wherein the at least three of the plurality of panels are consecutive panels.

29. The lottery game as recited in claim 27, wherein the drawing event designation comprises a unique combination of three playing panels.

30. The lottery game as recited in claim 27, wherein the drawing event designation comprises a unique combination of four playing panels.

31. The lottery game as recited in claim 26, wherein a prize is awarded for any lottery ticket that is a winning lottery ticket.

32. The lottery game as recited in claim 31, wherein a lottery ticket is a winning lottery ticket if a combination of winning game pieces matches at least one combination of revealed playing game pieces in the plurality of panels so that at least three of the revealed playing game pieces adjoin horizontally, vertically or diagonally to form at least one line.

33. The lottery game as recited in claim 26, wherein the game further comprises a means for authenticating the lottery ticket after a each drawing event.